

What LANGUAGE Did Jesus Speak?

Messrs. T. T. Clark of Edinburgh have published an English translation of the work entitled "The Words of Jesus," by Prof. Paul Dalman, professor of theology in the University of Leipzig. The author, who was one of the most distinguished Orientalists in Europe, begins by setting forth the reasons for believing that Jesus spoke the Galilean dialect.

The author then proceeds to discuss from a linguistic point of view the meaning of the utterances attributed to Jesus in the synoptic Gospels. The evidence for the primary hypothesis is of several kinds. Prof. Dalman adduces, for example, the custom which in the second century after Christ was represented as very ancient, of translating into Aramaic the words of the Rabbis in the synagogues of the Hellenistic Palestine. By Hebraists the author desires to distinguish from the Hellenistic Jews who spoke Greek, those who spoke, not Hebrew, but Aramaic. Attention is next directed to the Aramaic title for rabbis—the people in Palestine, and for feasts—titles that are attested by Josephus and the Mishna; priest, high priest, scribe, Pharisee, Sadducee, etc., used by Josephus and by the authors of the New Testament, are not Hebrew, but Aramaic. Then, again, there are traditions dating from a period considerably antecedent to Christ that John Hyrcanus heard in the synagogue a divine voice speaking in the Aramaic language, and that in the temple at Jerusalem the priests were forbidden to drink wine or eat on the chests in which the contributions of the faithful were deposited were in Aramaic. Moreover, there are old official documents in the Aramaic language. These include, first, the "Roll Concerning Fasts"—a catalogue of days on which fasting was forbidden, first compiled in the time of the rising against the Romans, about A.D. II, and later revised by Herod Agrippa II. (about 100 A.D.) to the Jews of South Judea, Galilee and Babylon! Both sets of these documents were destined for the Jewish people, and, primarily, indeed, for those of Palestine. A like inference may also be drawn from the fact that the public documents relating to purgation, divorce, marriage contract, refusal and renunciation of levirate marriage, etc., the Mishna gives the decisive formulae of these documents, which were important for securing legal validity for the most part, though not always in Aramaic, thus implying that this was the language commonly in use. Cumulative evidence is furnished for the postponed adoption, at the time of Jesus, of the Aramaic characters in place of the old Hebrew in copies of the Bible text. The change of character apparently presupposes a change of language. Stress is laid by Prof. Dalman on the facts that the Judaism of the second century of our era possessed the Bible text only in the Assyrian, i.e., the Aramaic, form.

Further evidence of the Alexandrian or Septuagint translation had been based upon Hebrew texts in this character. It has further been observed by students of the Mishna that the syntax and the vocabulary of the Hebrew of the Mishna prove themselves to be the creation of Jews who thought in Aramaic. We observe, finally, that the Mishna contains no fixed formulae of Jews who, as writers, called the Aramaic "Hebrew." Josephus, indeed, showed himself quite capable of distinguishing the language and the unwritten character of the "Syrians" from those of the "Hebreans." Nevertheless, between Hebrew and Aramaic words he makes no difference whatever.

Prof. Dalman addresses the people of Jerusalem—the incident is recounted in his history of the Jewish war against the Romans—is even called by him his paternal tongue, though in the circumstances nothing but Aramaic can have been used. Again, in the Johannine Gospel, the Aramaic terms Bethsaida, Galgaltha, etc., must be explained by the use of the Aramaic, too, must be explained by the "Hebrew tongue" in which Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem (Acts, xxi, 4; xxii, 2), and in which Jesus spoke to Paul (Acts, xxvi, 1). Hellenistic and Hebraist were the names, according to Acts, vi, 1, of the two parts of the Jewish people as divided by language. But, if it were possible to characterize the Jews of the Diaspora, it is clear that Aramaic was the prevalent speech of the Jewish people in the first century of our era; in so far, at least, as it was not Greek.

In Prof. Dalman's opinion the facts adduced do not justify us in drawing a distinction between Judea and Galilee, as if Hebrew was at least partially a spoken language in the former region. Inasmuch as the historical dominance of Aramaic in Judea may be inferred with certainty from the place names in Jerusalem and its environs. The author of this book cannot find ground for the belief expressed by another Orientalist that Hebrew was the language of the mother of Jesus, inasmuch as she belonged to South Palestine.

There is even less ground for supposing that the Jewish population in Galilee during the rising of the Maccabees considered that Simon, about 163 B.C., had other means of protecting them from their ill-disposed neighbors than by transferring them to Judea. John Hyrcanus (B.C. 135-105) appears later to have conquered Galilee and to have transferred its inhabitants to Judaism; but, under the circumstances, the Hebrew language was not to be looked for. What role the tongue of Galilee in general is true of little Nazareth in particular, to which has been wrongly attributed an isolation from intercourse with the outer world. As a matter of fact, Nazareth had on the one side support (Sepphoris), where the Jews were in close proximity, on the other, in close proximity, the cities of Yapha and Kesaloth, and it lay on the important highway of commerce that led from Sepphoris to the plain of Megiddo and onward to Caesarea. Our author points out that the actual discourses of Jesus in no way give the impression that He had grown up in Galilee. He had generally, up to His childhood, the Galileans generally, would have little contact with literary erudition. The fact implies that from this side he did not come into contact with the Hebrew language. The Aramaic was the mother tongue of the Galileans, as of the people of Galgalita, and, according to the Mishna, the Galileans understood and understood. From all these considerations the conclusion is drawn that Jesus grew up speaking the Aramaic tongue, and that He would be rebaptized to speak Aramaic to His disciples. And to the people in order to be understood. Of Him, least of all, who desired to preach the Gospel to the poor, or, in other words, to people who could understand from the Greek mode of the scribers, it is to be expected that He would have furnished His discourse with the superfluous aid, to the hearers, perplexing embellishment of the Hebrew form? M.W.H.

An Hour With a Philosopher.

As we look into "The Reflections of a Lonely Man," by A. C. M. (A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago), we must think that the man in question was not altogether lonely. He had for company the "Reflections of a Lonely Man," and these are excellent company, presupposing a good digestion and a natural agreement with tobacco. "When a man has just been well fed and sits in the easy comfort of his smoking jacket, and with his feet up, and with thought before he settles down to the serious business of thinking. . . . Secure in his coziness, the Lonely Man lights his briar pipe. 'There he is, with the most considerate company in the world. It really could not be told that he is alone with thought for a while, and will not attempt a profound penetration of the mysteries immediately after dinner. The gas fire occupies his untrustworthy thought. He sees advantages in it. He does not like to turn it off. This sort of thing could burn a million years with no pernicious result of deforestation. He

Mrs. Henry Stark Howland, who writes under the name of Henry West, is the authoress of the novel "Cliveden" (Lothrop Publishing Company, Boston), that it is meant to be interesting rather than important. This is a refreshing sentiment for some of us who have been subjected to much fiction that did not offer to let us off easily. In novel reading it is agreeable, though it may not be wise, to read with a purpose, to seek strictly a relaxation and pleasure, with nothing formidable in the background. Just think of the different sorts of important fiction—naturalistic, realistic, symbolical, sensitive, purposive, and we have not the patience to enumerate

A Blur on Browning.

So much care has been taken in the selection of biographers for the earlier volumes of the "English Men of Letters" series that it is difficult to understand how Mr. G. K. Chesterton came to be picked out to write the "Robert Browning" (Macmillans). Mr. Chesterton has achieved some notoriety in England as the writer of paradoxical articles. Some one has said

attitudes, that cast no light on how the reader is to accomplish what the movie is supposed to be doing.

The experiment of publishing such magazines is certainly being copied by the Macmillans with Mr. F. Marjorie Crawford's "Man Overboard," a pretty little volume. The designation "little novel" for the stories, however, seems not quite

THROUGH HELL WITH HIPRAH HUTT, by Arthur Young. A Humorous Classic. \$1.50. At all book shops. ZIMMERMAN'S, 155 Fifth av., N. Y.

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